

14-21 - INFORMATION & SCOPING MEETING - ROSEAU

JULY 16, 2014 - 11:00 A.M.

FOR THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION,

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power for a
Route Permit for the Great Northern High-Voltage
Transmission Line Project from Manitoba, Canada -
Minnesota Border to the Blackberry Substation near Grand
Rapids, Minnesota

PUC DOCKET NO. E-015/TL-14-21

Roseau Civic Center
121 Center Street East
Roseau, Minnesota

July 16, 2014

COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

I N D E X

SPEAKER	PAGE
Michael Kaluzniak	3
Julie Ann Smith	13
Bill Storm	21
David Moeller	22
Bill Storm	30
Darin Heller	47

1 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Good morning
2 folks. Thank you for coming out this morning.

3 My name is Michael Kaluzniak, I'm a staff
4 member of the Public Utilities Commission. And I
5 always like to not reward those who are late by
6 starting on time the best I can. I do appreciate
7 you coming out.

8 Today we'll be talking about the Great
9 Northern Transmission Line Project. It's a 500
10 kilovolt project, a transmission line coming down
11 from Canada and terminating near the Blackberry
12 Substation.

13 This is the routing proceeding for the
14 process. I've got many slides to go through here,
15 they give me a very long slide presentation, so I'll
16 try to make it as brief as possible.

17 If there's something you'd like more
18 information on, please raise your hand, you can
19 interrupt me if you like. Feel free to stop by
20 afterwards and I'll be here as well.

21 We have a court reporter here taking
22 notes for us so that we can enter your comments and
23 not lose what you're telling us here. We will
24 probably take a break at 12:30 if we go that long,
25 otherwise we'll go through.

1 There are various agencies involved with
2 this process. As you probably know, if you've
3 worked with governmental units before, there's a lot
4 of interagency coordination. I'm going to run
5 through just briefly who everybody is here and
6 hopefully get to your comments as soon as we can.

7 As I mentioned, I'm with the Minnesota
8 Public Utilities Commission. We're a five-member
9 body, about 60 staff members, we regulate the
10 permitting of power plants, pipelines, transmission
11 lines, wind farms, as well as landline telephones,
12 utility rate paying, service areas for telephone
13 service, and natural gas rates and service as well.

14 Minnesota Power is the applicant for the
15 project. They have applied to the Commission for
16 the permit. I'll come back to the agency
17 discussions here in a bit.

18 Because this is a transmission line
19 greater than 100 kilovolts and longer than 1500 feet
20 in length, they're required to obtain a route permit
21 from the Public Utilities Commission.

22 There is also a similar proceeding going
23 on that relates to the need for the project.
24 Minnesota law requires that the applicant obtain a
25 certificate of need from the Commission prior to the

1 approval of any route permits. And there's a
2 separate docket for that, it's docket 12-1163. If
3 you care to look at that, I'd be happy to help you
4 find it.

5 The need question on a state level
6 relates to the determination of whether it's in the
7 best interest of the consumers in Minnesota and
8 surroundings regions to have the project go forward
9 and also determines the size, type, and timing of
10 the project.

11 Routing itself relates to generally two
12 things -- generally speaking, two things. The first
13 being the location of the route itself, where would
14 it go and, secondly, what are the permit conditions
15 necessary to minimize potential impacts of the
16 project.

17 So these are some of the factors that are
18 considered by the Public Utilities Commission by law
19 in determining approval for the route, things such
20 as human settlements -- obviously we don't want to
21 impact lives more than we have to -- public health
22 and safety and so forth.

23 If I'm going too fast, I can slow down,
24 too, but people tend to get tired after about 10
25 lines.

1 There are other factors that are
2 considered and some of these things that are
3 identified here on this slide relate more to the
4 permit conditions themselves. Using existing
5 right-of-ways and corridors and so forth is
6 desirable versus going through new land that has no
7 previous development, for example.

8 Again, the permitted route includes the
9 actual route itself, the line, essentially saying
10 this is the centerline of the project. Around that
11 line there is a corridor and that's the permitted
12 route. The route is basically a strip of an area of
13 land in which the line can be placed.

14 The actual alignment is determined by
15 working from the anticipated alignment as the
16 process goes forward and is evaluated, and we
17 fine-tune it. It is ultimately determined after the
18 issuance of the route permit itself through a
19 process administered by the Department of Commerce
20 and approved by the Commission for the actual plan
21 approval.

22 I should note, also, that there is a
23 federal layer to this process. We'll have somebody
24 from the Department of Energy here speaking about
25 that shortly as well, and they have a separate

1 review process as well. We're trying to gain some
2 efficiencies by doing some of the work together here
3 today.

4 Here is some information on route permit
5 issuance. The Commission itself does not administer
6 the acquisition of land, easements, or otherwise for
7 the projects once we approve them. Minnesota law
8 explicitly removes that authority from the
9 Commission, so we don't have the authority to direct
10 who gets what where beyond the awarding of the route
11 permit itself.

12 This is a high level view of the routing
13 proceeding. Starting with application acceptance,
14 this has gone on -- it went on last month, I
15 believe. Acceptance doesn't mean that the
16 application is okay and we're going forward with the
17 project, what it means is that it contains
18 sufficient information to proceed with our analysis.

19 And here we are in the second blue box
20 there, the rectangle, the public information and
21 scoping meetings, to gain more input from the public
22 on the process.

23 If I could, could I have you raise your
24 hand if you've been to one of these meetings before?
25 Have you folks been to a meeting by Minnesota Power?

1 A few of you. Okay.

2 To provide some more information about
3 the process, within the routing there is an
4 environmental review that goes on. Bill Storm from
5 the Department of Commerce will speak to that in a
6 short while and discuss the environmental impact
7 statement and the scoping proceeding.

8 The main reason we're here at this
9 proceeding is to obtain more information from you
10 about what you feel the impacts of the project as
11 proposed would be and whether there's better
12 alternatives available and if there's additional
13 permit considerations included in the final route
14 permit.

15 Basically, as we go forward, this takes a
16 separate track. So you've got the joint
17 environmental review, an environmental impact
18 statement being developed by the Department of
19 Commerce and the Department of Energy, but also
20 there's the Public Utilities process. Eventually
21 those two kind of come together upon issuance of the
22 final EIS and recommendations from agencies and some
23 testimony developed through these later evidentiary
24 proceedings.

25 Those materials are brought forward, we

1 have an administrative law judge who will help us
2 summarize the information, do analysis on its
3 legality. He works with another state agency called
4 the Office of Administrative Hearings and he will
5 issue a report. That report will come back to us,
6 the Commission, we will analyze it and then bring it
7 forward for a decision.

8 That's anticipated in total to take
9 approximately 18 months on the outside, no
10 guarantees on this. This is an estimated project
11 timeline, I wouldn't put too much thought in these
12 numbers that are there. We are on track with it
13 right now, we are here in July.

14 This is part of the Notice of Comment
15 Period that went out. The Commission establishes
16 dockets for each of its individual cases and
17 projects. This is docket 14-21, 14 being the year,
18 21 being the 21st project filed in this year.

19 We issued a notice of completeness on the
20 application on April 18 and established a comment
21 period on the initial completeness previous to that.

22 The Commission then made a decision in
23 June, as I mentioned, to approve it and go forward.
24 At that point we referred it to the Department of
25 Commerce for this proceeding.

1 I'm going to skip through a couple of
2 these.

3 This is what our website looks like. You
4 can see how you would sign up for information. You
5 can do that online at our website by clicking on the
6 appropriate docket number and signing up for it. In
7 the eDocket system there will be dozens and dozens
8 of items already entered into it. Typically with
9 these larger projects we run into the hundreds, in
10 fact, some are well over a thousand.

11 If you don't want that much information
12 there are other ways to participate. One of those
13 would be to get on the project mailing list, have
14 yourself put on that. We have some orange cards
15 over here to fill out, please put the project number
16 on there, and we can make sure that's put on there
17 as well, and then we can notify you, preferably by
18 e-mail, it's a lot easier than us having to mail
19 thousands and thousands of pieces of paper if
20 they're not of interest. But we're happy to help
21 you in any way if you need to gain that information.

22 There are also speaker cards here if you
23 wish to sign up to speak. Typically people will
24 fill one of these out if you need to speak and get
25 out of here, you have something else you have to do

1 and we put these in front of the line.

2 So this is a comment paper, comment page
3 form developed by the Department of Commerce, and
4 Bill will speak to this. But generally this is
5 where you would enter your comments. You can also
6 do this online. You can also do it in writing, you
7 can do a fax, you can do an e-mail.

8 I think the important thing to note on
9 this is that, again, we're looking at both where the
10 line will go and the permit conditions. So if
11 there's a graveyard we don't know about or some
12 feature out there that needs to be taken into
13 consideration on the proposed routes, this is what
14 we want to know about.

15 The other piece that's important to know
16 about this is that we need to help the Department of
17 Commerce do its work by getting this information,
18 but also asking them to compare it apples to apples.
19 So Bill will talk about some of the criteria they
20 use for evaluating these things and how they would
21 determine which line or which alignment is the
22 appropriate one to choose, and there's a lot of
23 criteria that go into that.

24 If you check the application materials,
25 for a typical environmental impact statement, you'll

1 see many factors -- distances to houses, number of
2 trees, type of land -- and all sorts of different
3 things go into that decision. And so there's many
4 factors that weigh in on this decision. If you'd
5 like to see a different route alignment, there is
6 one not on the table that should be, or one that's
7 already on the table that needs to be considered in
8 a different way, we need to get to an
9 apples-to-apples comparison of all of these
10 features. So please try to be as explicit as
11 possible.

12 You should also notice that the
13 applicants have three people in the back with
14 geographic information systems set up, ready to go,
15 doing maps for your property so that you can get a
16 better idea of what's there. And they can not only
17 give you a map of your facility as it relates to the
18 location of the proposed line or route alternatives
19 at stake, but also they can give you a lot more
20 detail. So feel free to take advantage of that
21 while we're here.

22 Project contacts. This is from the
23 Public Utilities Commission. We have cards over
24 there for Tracy, I have some here for me as well.
25 Tracy is the public advisor, I'm filling in for her

1 because she's unavailable today. I work with the
2 planning unit that helps develop the
3 recommendations, I brief the Commissioners. The
4 Commissioners follow these items very closely. We
5 try to keep our process as transparent and inclusive
6 of the public as possible, and we really appreciate
7 you turning out today.

8 So, with that, I will turn it over to
9 Mr. Storm, who will -- I believe you're next.

10 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: It is actually me.

11 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Oh, excuse me. I
12 will turn it over to Julie Smith, who will speak on
13 behalf of the Department of Energy. And there's a
14 federal environmental impact statement and she will
15 speak to that and then turn it over to Bill Storm
16 from the Department of Commerce.

17 Thank you.

18 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: Hello. My name is
19 Julie Ann Smith and I work for the United States
20 Department of Energy. I'm with the Office of
21 Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability.

22 I also would like to thank you today for
23 coming and taking your time to attend this meeting.
24 Your presence and input are absolutely vital to this
25 process and vital to a robust public participation

1 piece that is so important to the environmental
2 impact statement process.

3 This is a scoping meeting, which is all
4 about us, or me, from the Department of Energy
5 perspective, listening to you. The DOE needs to
6 hear what issues you think we should consider in
7 conducting our environmental analysis.

8 The reason we're here today is, again,
9 because Minnesota Power is proposing to construct
10 the Great Northern Transmission Line Project. This
11 is an international transmission line and Minnesota
12 Power has asked the Department of Energy for a
13 permit to cross the U.S./Canadian border. Minnesota
14 Power submitted their presidential permit
15 application to the Department of Energy in April of
16 2014.

17 Essentially, before any electric energy
18 transmission facility can be built across the U.S.
19 international border the project proponent must
20 obtain a presidential permit from DOE. A DOE
21 presidential permit authorizes the company to
22 construct, operate, maintain, and connect electric
23 transmission facilities at the border crossing.

24 The DOE is involved in this proceeding
25 for one reason, the proposed transmission line would

1 cross the international border. If the line did not
2 cross the international border I would not be here
3 with you today.

4 With that said, the DOE does not have
5 authority to site this line. Only the State of
6 Minnesota, specifically the Minnesota Public
7 Utilities Commission, has that authority. The
8 Department of Energy does not convey the right of
9 eminent domain with this presidential permit, nor
10 can the Department of Energy address the issue of
11 compensation for land that will be impacted by the
12 proposed Great Northern Transmission Line Project.

13 Before DOE can issue this kind of permit,
14 we must comply with the National Environmental
15 Policy Act or, in short, NEPA. NEPA is the federal
16 law that serves as the basic nation's charter for
17 environmental protection. It requires that all
18 federal agencies consider the potential
19 environmental impacts of their proposed actions.
20 NEPA is based on a set of principles. Full
21 disclosure and public participation that enhances
22 understanding on all parts, not only for you to
23 understand the process but, more importantly, for us
24 to understand your knowledge of the area and the
25 project. And so basically that's why we're here at

1 the scoping meeting.

2 The second principle is that we explore
3 alternatives to the proposed line or action that we
4 received in the application. That includes a
5 no-action alternative, which contemplates what would
6 happen if the line were not built. It also requires
7 that potential impacts be assessed with rigor,
8 scientific rigor, that we consider mitigation or
9 ways to reduce or avoid impacts to resources, and
10 that we must weigh options and explain decisions.
11 And as Mike explained, those options need to be
12 explored in an apples-to-apples sort of context.

13 NEPA basically promotes better decisions
14 and informs agency decision-making and provides you
15 the opportunity to learn about what we as a federal
16 agency are proposing to do and for you to speak in a
17 timely way and provide us information and comments
18 on our proposed actions.

19 In terms of process, NEPA is often
20 referred to as an umbrella statute, in that it
21 allows agencies and private developers to comply
22 with many, as you see on this list, of the
23 environmental health and safety related laws for
24 which we are all responsible before we can take
25 action. We analyze the potential effects for

1 federal agency action to numerous resource types and
2 include other human sort of related issues like
3 environmental justice, socioeconomic impacts,
4 recreation, aesthetics, things like that, in one
5 analytical document. And as Mike mentioned, we are
6 developing this EIS in concert with the state so
7 that we can increase efficiencies and reduce
8 redundancy and the times that we come back to get
9 information from you.

10 For this proposed project, the DOE has
11 determined that the appropriate level of analysis in
12 NEPA is an environmental impact statement. This
13 coincides with the decision on the part of the state
14 to also prepare an EIS.

15 An EIS essentially tells the story of the
16 project. The Great Northern EIS will analyze the
17 foreseeable environmental impacts that might flow
18 from the DOE granting the presidential permit. The
19 EIS will also identify steps that might be needed to
20 mitigate environmental impacts.

21 The other federal agencies involved at
22 this point in the project are the U.S. Army Corps of
23 Engineers, St. Paul District, and the U.S. Fish and
24 Wildlife Service. They have permitting or oversight
25 authority for proposed facilities within their

1 respective jurisdictions. The U.S. Army Corps of
2 Engineers is currently a cooperating agency with the
3 Department of Energy in the preparation of this EIS.

4 So, once again, we're here to listen and
5 to get your comments and suggestions for the issues
6 that we should be addressing in the EIS. We would
7 also like to know if there are any alternative
8 routes for the proposed project.

9 Once the scoping period closes, and this
10 is sort of an overall step-wise process of the NEPA
11 EIS process, once the scoping period closes on
12 August 11, 2015 -- '14, sorry, we will get to work
13 on preparing the draft environmental impact
14 statement. That will take several months. Once
15 that draft is completed, it will be posted on our
16 website, which will be up here in just a moment, and
17 distributed to anyone that has signed up on the
18 mailing list.

19 If you want to be on the mailing list,
20 once again, you can sign up at the table by the door
21 by using the state form. We are sharing
22 information, so any information that you submit to
23 the state, the Department of Energy will also
24 receive. You can also sign up on our website. And
25 I put that up.

1 There will be at least a 45-day comment
2 period for you to review the draft environmental
3 impact statement once it's done and we make it
4 publicly available, and you can submit comments at
5 that time. During the comment period on the draft
6 EIS you will be able to submit comments by writing,
7 e-mail, mail, fax, all of the traditional ways. And
8 we will also be coming back to Minnesota to hold
9 public hearings to receive oral comments on the
10 draft EIS. So we will be back after the draft EIS
11 is issued.

12 After the close of the comment period on
13 the draft EIS, we will prepare the final EIS. Every
14 comment received, that we get on the draft EIS, will
15 be included and responded to in the final EIS. Once
16 again, we will respond to every single comment that
17 we receive on this project. When the final EIS is
18 completed, it will be sent to anyone on our mailing
19 list and posted on the EIS website.

20 By law, the Department of Energy may not
21 make a final decision on the Great Northern
22 Transmission Line presidential permit application
23 until 30 days after publication of the final EIS.
24 And that decision would come out in the last step,
25 which is called the record of decision.

1 At the completion of the EIS process, the
2 Department may or may not issue the presidential
3 permit. If the Department were to issue the
4 presidential permit, the transmission line and
5 associated facilities could not be built unless and
6 until all other state, local, and federal permits
7 are obtained.

8 For this meeting, I want to draw your
9 attention that we do have a stenographer that is
10 here to write down any comments that you want to
11 come up and give to us orally. Whether or not you
12 choose to speak, you are invited to send us written
13 comments. All comments, whether written or oral,
14 are treated the same and have equal weight.

15 We will accept comments until August 11th
16 at the close of the comment period, however, we will
17 consider comments that are submitted after that date
18 to the extent that we can.

19 If you have any specific questions about
20 the project itself, representatives from Minnesota
21 Power are here, along with their technological
22 gurus, to provide you with that information, and
23 maps, and they can basically give you the details,
24 whether that's about routes, how they got to the
25 routing alternatives, or even tower designs.

1 So, once again, several ways to make
2 scoping comments. More importantly, I want to draw
3 your attention to the www.greatnorthernEIS.org
4 website. There is a comment -- submitting your
5 comment function there. Any comment that is
6 submitted will be made public on this EIS website.
7 We do that in a very timely way so you can see your
8 comments as well as other comments from the various
9 meetings.

10 Also, when we produce certain documents
11 we will be posting those documents to this website,
12 so please, once again, mark this. This is a good
13 place to go to find all of the information related
14 to the environmental reviews -- federal and state --
15 related to the proposed Great Northern Transmission
16 Line Project.

17 Once again, thank you very much for
18 coming.

19 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Thanks, Julie.
20 Thanks, Jules.

21 Minnesota Power is going to give a
22 presentation on the process, their project, let you
23 know about their project. Once they're done it'll
24 come back to me and I will give a short talk about
25 what environmental review is all about, and then I

1 will be soliciting comments from the audience on
2 what issues and what alternatives you want me to
3 consider in the environmental impact statement.

4 So I'll turn it over to Dave with
5 Minnesota Power.

6 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Thanks, Bill.

7 My name is David Moeller, I'm an attorney
8 at Minnesota Power. We have other folks from
9 Minnesota Power here, including Jim Atkinson is in
10 the back there, who you've probably met or talked to
11 on the routing especially.

12 I want to give a quick overview on the
13 project itself, as Bill said, and then we're here to
14 listen, and we thank you for coming today. And we
15 hope this is not just the first time you've heard
16 about this project, we've tried to be out here a
17 lot, as the slides discuss.

18 The first one is we consider this project
19 not just a transmission line, but an important
20 project for our nation as a whole. And as we
21 develop energy that provides the renewable aspect,
22 diversity of what we're doing, and other aspects
23 that go beyond just a transmission line.

24 Minnesota Power considers the Great
25 Northern Transmission Line part of a larger plan.

1 We have to file a resource plan with the State of
2 Minnesota, the Public Utilities Commission, every
3 two or so years, and this has been a part of our
4 last couple of resource plans. And as we see hydro
5 energy, what we'll get off of the Great Northern
6 Transmission Line, as an important aspect how we
7 view going forward.

8 MR. BILL STORM: Can you people hear in
9 the back? Okay.

10 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Okay. Is that
11 better? Okay. Thanks.

12 Minnesota Power historically has been a
13 coal-based utility. When I started at the company
14 in 2005 we were 95 percent coal. Our goal is to get
15 to a third, a third, a third, meaning a third of
16 coal energy, a third of natural gas and purchases,
17 and a third of renewable. And we consider the
18 Manitoba Hydro output that we will receive off this
19 line under the renewable bucket, even though it
20 doesn't count under the Minnesota requirements for
21 renewables because of the size of the hydro
22 facilities in Manitoba. But we see this project as
23 helping to meet those goals of getting to a third, a
24 third, a third, and what we've termed energy
25 forward.

1 Beyond Minnesota Power's needs, we also
2 see the line as serving needs for the region as a
3 whole. This slide talks about three different
4 aspects. The first is diversity, meaning diversity
5 of the fuel mix so that as we have new regulations
6 from EPA, as we have other requirements as a
7 utility, Minnesota Power as a utility and other
8 utilities, bringing in hydro energy helps meet that
9 fuel diversity and generation diversity.

10 We also see the line as helping support
11 increasing demand. In particular, Minnesota Power
12 has increasing demand on the Iron Range with new
13 mines coming in and other aspects of other new
14 projects happening within Minnesota Power's service
15 territory. So the 250 megawatts of energy capacity
16 that Minnesota Power will receive, plus another 133
17 megawatts of energy off of this transmission line
18 helps serve those needs of our customers which we're
19 required to meet per Commission requirements.

20 And then, finally, reliability. We
21 always hear about keep the lights on, and this
22 transmission is an important part of reliability.
23 Right now there's only one major line between
24 Manitoba and Minnesota, the existing line that's
25 near here in Roseau. This would be a second source,

1 a second 500 kV line to connect those two important
2 systems and to provide additional reliability, not
3 just for Minnesota Power but for the region as a
4 whole.

5 Besides the important part of kind of
6 showing what the need is for the project, we also
7 have on a parallel path determined what is our
8 siting and permitting strategy. And Jim has been at
9 the forefront of this, as well as other folks here,
10 having open houses, meeting with people throughout
11 the whole study area. And we started a path, first,
12 you know, what is the critical things that we need
13 to figure out as we build the transmission line or
14 route a transmission line. Make sure that there's
15 no fatal flaws to what the routes or potential areas
16 are. Define the study area, which we will have a
17 map of in a second. And then engage stakeholders
18 multiple times, as the slides will show as well.
19 And then determine what those range of alternatives
20 are based on that input. It's not just an exercise
21 that we do on our computers back in our offices, it
22 will be taking your input and trying to -- and
23 figuring out what is the best place or where are the
24 best places we can go with a transmission line.

25 And then finally under the last bullet is

1 apply for permits. And as Julie and Mike said, we
2 have applied for permits from the Department of
3 Energy and the Minnesota Public Utilities
4 Commission, as well as we'll have to apply for other
5 permits that I'll talk about in a second.

6 This slide is probably too small for
7 anybody to see, but the two headlines are
8 opportunities and constraints. As you can see, the
9 opportunity section is pretty small and the
10 constraint section is pretty long. And the reason
11 for this is to say that there are opportunities, you
12 know, where we follow existing corridors, follow
13 existing transmission lines for routing transmission
14 lines, but there's also many constraints in places
15 where we try to either avoid or can't go at all
16 based on state law. So we take those factors into
17 consideration as we come up with a range of
18 alternatives of where the transmission routes could
19 be.

20 As I mentioned earlier, we have done
21 multiple rounds and engaged in stakeholder outreach.
22 This is the first one that we did, in May of 2012,
23 with all the different locations, including here in
24 Roseau. And then we took that outreach and started
25 defining study areas and study corridors. We got

1 down to more specific areas, or shorter -- or, not
2 shorter, but more defined areas in round two. And
3 in round three additional areas. And then we
4 decided that for round three we needed to come back
5 up here in this area and see additional areas for
6 where the border crossing could be and have
7 additional input from folks.

8 And then after all that input, plus other
9 analysis that we did, we came up with route
10 alternatives, which we call the blue and the orange
11 routes. And the maps, as Mike and Julie mentioned,
12 we do have GIS people here who can give you more
13 detailed maps of where your property is in the
14 vicinity of a route alternative.

15 So those are the two main routes, the
16 preferred and alternative routes. The blue route is
17 our preferred route over the orange route, and
18 there's a common area on the border to the first
19 split there.

20 This next slide just gives you kind of an
21 idea of how we narrowed it down. From a study area
22 of 19,783 square miles, to corridors of 7,900 miles,
23 to specific route options, looking at over 2,400
24 miles, to the route alternatives that we had in the
25 fall of 2013. And then, finally, once the line's in

1 service and the rights-of-way that are going to be
2 required for this project is about 200 feet of
3 right-of-way, there will be about eight miles of
4 actual impact. Not where the structures are, but
5 kind of the whole right-of-way, or 220 miles of
6 line.

7 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I just wanted to make
8 sure that everyone knew that the GIS stations are
9 available not only for getting maps for yourself,
10 but we will actually digitize suggested alternatives
11 right on those and make it part of the record as
12 well.

13 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Thanks, Jim, I should
14 have said that earlier.

15 This slide is, again, a summary of the
16 different input that we had from individuals and
17 agencies, with multiple meetings, open houses,
18 comments, online comments, other forms of comments.

19 And then we were here in February as well
20 for scoping meetings on the certificate of need
21 environmental report. And Bill can talk about that
22 as well. So we've been out here once for one
23 official public hearing, and we'll be back for
24 additional hearings on the certificate of need, as
25 well as on the route permit, as Julie and Mike

1 mentioned.

2 And we see the major permits, we'll have
3 to get additional permits for crossing highways in
4 other parts of the project, but there's really five
5 major permits. The certificate of need that we
6 talked about, which is saying if the project is
7 needed, and that's a determination by the Minnesota
8 Public Utilities Commission; the state route permit,
9 which this hearing is part of and also from the PUC;
10 the federal presidential permit as Julie from the
11 Department of Energy discussed for the border
12 crossing; and the related environmental review.

13 We also will need a section 404 permit
14 under the Clean Water Act from the U.S. Army Corps
15 of Engineers for impacts to wetlands. Primarily
16 where the substation is going to be in Blackberry
17 near Grand Rapids, there will be impacts to wetlands
18 there. There's also impacts to wetlands along the
19 whole route, but the permit is mostly tied to the
20 substation impacts.

21 And then we'll also need a permit from
22 the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for
23 crossing state lands, or they call it a license, so
24 we'll have to obtain that as well.

25 And the last two we have not yet applied

1 for but we're in the process of preparing those
2 applications, and some of them are contingent on
3 where the Commission ultimately determines where the
4 route should be.

5 That's my last slide. So we, again,
6 appreciate you coming, and as Jim said, please feel
7 free to use our GIS resources if you have specific
8 mapping questions or if you want to look at
9 different route alternatives.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you, Dave.

12 Good afternoon. My name is Bill Storm,
13 I'm with the Department of Commerce. The Department
14 of Commerce serves a function in this process as we
15 provide -- we facilitate some of the program for the
16 Public Utilities Commission, who is the final
17 decision-maker, but our biggest role is we are
18 responsible for the environmental review.

19 An environmental review in this context
20 of this docket means an EIS, environmental impact
21 statement. And as Julie said, since there is a
22 federal component to this thing, the feds also need
23 to do an environmental impact statement. And what
24 happens there commonly is, to reduce redundancy, the
25 feds and the state will work together and will

1 produce one environmental impact statement that
2 satisfies both the fed's needs and the state's
3 needs.

4 Before I go into the program, I just want
5 to go over what was on the table. If you're not on
6 our mailing list and you want to be on our mailing
7 list, please fill out a pink card and give it to
8 either Mike or myself. Speaker cards, if you want
9 to speak tonight. There are slides of the
10 presentation that we are going over, and these
11 slides have information on them that you may find
12 useful as you start thinking more about the project.

13 There is also a comment sheet. I do have
14 a court reporter here tonight to take your comments
15 on the record and they will become part of the
16 official record, but if you don't feel comfortable
17 speaking in front of a crowd or you want to think
18 about it a little bit more, I have these blank
19 comment sheets that you can take home and fill out
20 at your leisure. You can fill them out while you're
21 here, if you fill them out while you're here, just
22 drop them in the box and I'll make sure they get
23 incorporated into the record, too, as a comment.
24 But my e-mail, my snail mail, my fax number is
25 already on here.

1 The next thing is a fact sheet the
2 Department of Commerce puts out that explains
3 easements and right-of-ways relative to transmission
4 lines. You may find that interesting.

5 And the last thing was a draft scoping
6 document. The main reason I'm here tonight is since
7 I have to write an environmental impact statement
8 for this project, one of my first tasks is to come
9 to the public and ask the public what issues or
10 concerns or alternatives do you want to make sure
11 that I evaluate in the environmental impact
12 statement. So this document lays out what that
13 process is all about. And it also provides a table
14 of contents to what I think is how the environmental
15 impact statement should be organized and the issues.
16 And I'll be covering how I want you guys to help me
17 flesh that out in a second.

18 Mike talked about the process a little
19 bit, I'm going to try to keep it short because there
20 is some redundancy in these slides. But you are
21 here, we're at the public meeting, we have a public
22 meeting here this week, and next week I'm doing a
23 road show across northern Minnesota having these
24 public meetings, soliciting input from the public on
25 issues and impacts and alternatives you want me to

1 evaluate.

2 Once the public meetings are done, the
3 physical meetings are done the end of next week,
4 there will be an open comment period. The comment
5 period is open until August 14th, I think, and I'll
6 show a slide, the last slide will show that. And
7 that gives you the opportunity to not only comment
8 here at the meeting, but also submit written
9 comments during that open comment period. Once the
10 comment period closes, I will take the comments that
11 I got.

12 And everything I do, as far as
13 environmental review, I'm also doing it jointly with
14 Julie's group at the feds, but I'm going to talk in
15 my first person, so just assume that the feds are
16 along with me on this.

17 Once the comment period closes, I will
18 then assemble everybody's comments. I will give the
19 applicant an opportunity to put their input on all
20 the comments collected, and then I will make a
21 recommendation to my commissioner on what the scope
22 of the environmental impact statement should be.

23 When you think about a scope of an
24 environmental impact statement, think of a table of
25 contents -- what should that EIS cover, what issues,

1 what concerns, what potential problems.

2 Once the scope is laid out, we will then
3 begin working on the environmental impact statement.
4 Once -- the environmental impact statement will take
5 the information we have already on hand and then
6 generate other information based on comments I get
7 from the public, comments I get from local units of
8 government, comments I get from state agencies, and
9 we will produce the EIS in a draft form.

10 Once the EIS comes out in a draft form, I
11 will be back up here for another road show to take
12 comment on that. That's an opportunity for the
13 people to say, well, Bill, you missed my comment I
14 made, or, Bill, you didn't take my comment, so you
15 didn't flesh it out the way I wanted you to flesh it
16 out. So we'll be doing another road trip to take
17 comments. That road trip will then have a comment
18 period following it. Once that comment period ends,
19 we will start working on the final EIS.

20 And the final EIS is basically the draft
21 EIS with another volume to it that lists all of your
22 comments and then our responses to your comments.
23 And those responses may be out of scope, the
24 comment's out of the scope, it wasn't in the scope,
25 or it may be that's a great point, go back and look

1 at section 4, we revised it and changed it based on
2 the information you gave us. Those types of things.

3 Once the final EIS -- as the final EIS is
4 being written, once the draft is out, we had the
5 meetings, we're writing the final EIS, we will be
6 back in the area for a public hearing. The public
7 hearing, as Mike said, is with an ALJ, an
8 administrative law judge from the Office of
9 Administrative Hearings, and that's to take your
10 comments on the whole process.

11 Once that road show is done there's a
12 comment period, written comments come in, the judge
13 will then make a report with recommendations and
14 findings, that report goes back to the Commission,
15 and the Commission eventually makes the ultimate
16 decision, and that decision is is the EIS adequate,
17 should we grant a route permit, and what conditions
18 should we put on that route permit. So that's
19 basically the schedule in a nutshell.

20 In the State of Minnesota on large energy
21 projects such as a transmission line, there are two
22 types of environmental review. A full process and
23 the alternative process. This is a large project so
24 it has to go through the full process. The full
25 process includes a public scoping and comment

1 period, that's what we're doing now. A scoping
2 decision, the decision comes out from my
3 commissioner on what the table of contents of the
4 EIS should be. It contains an EIS, a draft EIS. It
5 has a public meeting and comment period on that
6 draft EIS, and then a final environmental impact
7 statement based on the comments on the draft EIS.

8 The purpose of what we're here tonight to
9 do is to give the citizens an opportunity to
10 participate in my development of the scope, my
11 development of the table of contents of that
12 environmental impact statement. And you do that by
13 suggesting alternative routes or route segments and
14 by suggesting specific impacts, specific issues or
15 specific areas that you're concerned about that you
16 want to make sure the EIS covers.

17 Okay. The scoping decision by rule must
18 do three things. It must identify alternative
19 routes, if any, to be addressed in the EIS, specific
20 impacts that are going to be addressed in the EIS,
21 and it should also provide a schedule of when the
22 EIS should be completed.

23 The EIS, Jules touched on this, is
24 basically a written document that describes the
25 human and environmental impacts of the transmission

1 line and any alternatives that make it into scope,
2 and methods to mitigate those impacts. So that's
3 basically what the document is. The document is
4 basically -- it's not a decision document, it's a
5 fact-finding document. It lays out the facts of the
6 potential impacts, potential mitigation, and of the
7 alternatives in the route.

8 This is where this document comes in and
9 where your help comes in. Like I said, what I'm
10 trying to get from the public on these road trips is
11 I'm trying to get issues that you're concerned
12 about, that you want to make sure -- that you might
13 have local knowledge about that you want to make
14 sure I cover in my environmental impact statement.

15 An example is, if you look at this
16 document here and you look at the table of contents,
17 the table of contents in my draft scope is very
18 broad. Biological resources, air resources. What
19 I'm asking the public to do is help me fill in the
20 detail there. If you look on here, you can look at
21 table of contents, item 5.13 is natural environment.
22 Okay, that's a pretty broad category. Subcategories
23 are pretty broad, too, one of them being flora,
24 plants. And you may have a particular knowledge of
25 something, you know, along County Road E or along

1 Highway 101 I know there's this Lapland buttercup,
2 and that's right in the middle of the transmission
3 route and I'm a little worried about that, so I want
4 to make sure your EIS talks about the impact of this
5 transmission line on that Lapland buttercup and how
6 you could mitigate it. Maybe move the line a little
7 bit, adjust the right-of-way a little bit, or maybe
8 move the plant a little bit or have some other
9 mechanism that mitigates the potential impact to
10 that plant. That's easy.

11 The hard one is, you may have an issue
12 that you're concerned about, but you think the best
13 way to mitigate that issue is by proposing an
14 alternative route or alternative route segment. And
15 on cases like this where we have a 300-mile line,
16 we're mostly dealing with alternative route
17 segments. Somebody has an old stand of ancient
18 cedars on their property and they look at the maps
19 in the application and the route is going right
20 through that, that gives them a little concern so
21 they want us to evaluate an alternative route that
22 avoids that area, you know, that avoids that impact.
23 So what you'd be asking me is you'd be saying, okay,
24 Bill, I see in your draft scope you have a section
25 on alternative routes. I want to propose an

1 alternative route segment, 'cause I have an issue
2 that I think the only way to mitigate that issue is
3 avoidance, and I want you to consider this
4 alternative route. That's what I'm seeking here.

5 And if you want to do that, the rules
6 that we play by require you to put something on the
7 table also. One is you have to explain to me why
8 you want this alternative route or route segment.
9 And that is what are you trying to mitigate, you
10 know. And the second item is you have to give me
11 all the supporting data. So if you're trying to
12 mitigate because of that Lapland butterfly -- or
13 whatever it was, plant, you have to explain it, why
14 you're trying to mitigate it.

15 There could be, like the old cedar stand,
16 there could be an airport runway, there could be
17 anything that you're trying to mitigate that you
18 think the only way to mitigate it is with an
19 alternative route segment. This is not for, I don't
20 want to look at it on my property so let's move it
21 to Joe's property. Because in that vein you haven't
22 mitigated anything, you've just moved the impact
23 somewhere else. So those types of responses don't
24 carry as much weight.

25 And I'll run you through some examples of

1 what I did. This might be kind of hard to see. But
2 you can see, this is a case that we did, a line
3 running between Tower and Embarrass, okay. The
4 utility at the time wanted to run their transmission
5 line down, I think that's 135, okay. So it's going
6 across a series of private properties. And along
7 this road, the people are set back a little bit from
8 135, but not a lot because who wants to plow all
9 that, and the original proposal was to run that
10 transmission line between the homes and the road.
11 And the people were a little concerned about that
12 and they also had local knowledge of a whole tract
13 of land that was tax-forfeited land, that was public
14 land. So although their issue was we really don't
15 want that crossing our property, the bigger issue
16 was why cross private property when you can cross
17 public property. So this alternative was put forth,
18 was asked for in this type of meeting, made it to
19 scope, was evaluated in the environmental document.
20 And when the route permit came out, the route, the
21 Commission did decide to run it down the
22 tax-forfeited land, down the public land.

23 Another example is another transmission
24 line. The purple line is a rebuild of a
25 transmission line from a 69 to a 115 that a utility

1 wanted to do. There was a group of people who were
2 concerned about a historic property that was located
3 right in front of that 69 kV line. They felt that
4 jumping up to a 115 kV line would be too intrusive
5 to this historic property. They wanted to mitigate
6 the impact of this historic property and they came
7 forth with two alternatives. They came forth with a
8 route alternative segment, which came out of the
9 route, you can see the route, that real faint line
10 there, they came out with the blue one that came out
11 of the route and down, that's a route alternative
12 segment. And they also came through with this
13 dotted line, which is an alignment adjustment. They
14 stayed within the route but they wanted the
15 alignment changed a little bit. Both of these,
16 because they were trying to mitigate the impact to
17 an historic structure, made it through scope.

18 Now, at the end, the Commission, when
19 they made their decision, they did not think that
20 the impact to the -- once they reviewed the
21 record -- the environmental impact statement and the
22 record from the hearing, they did not feel that the
23 impact was significant to the historic structure and
24 they permitted the rebuild where the applicant
25 wanted it.

1 This next one is another property where
2 the transmission line was going across a series of
3 public -- or private property again. The series of
4 landowners along this strip of land knew that there
5 was a corporate paper mill land just to the north
6 side of the road. And they asked, Bill, would you
7 evaluate the impact of moving that line to the north
8 side of that road in your EIS. That made -- that
9 seemed reasonable to me, it made it into scope, and
10 when the Commission finally made their decision at
11 the end they did permit that line on the north side
12 of that road, across the corporate property rather
13 than the private property.

14 Another one. There was another
15 transmission line, it was a rebuild from a 69 to a
16 115. There was a property owner who had a memorial
17 real close to the existing 69 line. They asked if I
18 would evaluate moving that route across the road to
19 avoid any possible impact to this memorial they had
20 for one of their family members. It seemed
21 reasonable to me, it made it to scope. In the
22 environmental impact statement we laid out the
23 physical coordinates of where the memorial was
24 located, we photographed it, we looked at what it
25 would look like -- made an artistic rendering, what

1 it would look like with a transmission line there,
2 and in the end the Commission felt that the memorial
3 was far enough away from the right-of-way that it
4 would not be impacted and they granted the line the
5 way the applicant wanted it.

6 Another one. This is another situation
7 where there was a transmission line rebuild going
8 again from a 69 to a 115 kV, we see that a lot.
9 Somewhere along the line the county road was
10 adjusted and moved. The 69 kV line followed the
11 county road, and then somewhere along the line the
12 county road was moved up, these property owners were
13 asking, since you're going to rebuild it, can we
14 move it up to the road again like it was before. It
15 made sense to me, I incorporated it into the scope,
16 and when the decision came out from the PUC they did
17 make that adjustment and they did permit the
18 transmission line to follow the new road.

19 So that's what I'm -- I'm trying to put
20 in perspective, when I'm asking the members of the
21 public to give me alternative routes or alternative
22 route segments for me to consider, I do that for a
23 historic perspective so you can see what I'm looking
24 for and that you have to be mitigating something,
25 you know, you have to be able to hang your hat on

1 something.

2 Okay. This slide just shows that I don't
3 work in a vacuum, I work with the other state
4 agencies, the Department of Transportation, the
5 Department of Health, the Department of Natural
6 Resources, the Pollution Control Agency. We sort of
7 work together. And those agencies that have
8 downstream permitting authority, they ran through a
9 list of potential permits that are required after
10 this, if they are granted this permit. The statute
11 requires those agencies to play with me, to
12 participate in my process. And this is just an
13 illustration of that same thing. I'm not working in
14 a vacuum, I am gathering information from the other
15 agencies.

16 Dave went through the downstream permits.

17 Now, normally, on a transmission line
18 project like this, you have two sources of
19 information. You'd have the Department of
20 Commerce's website, which is right here, and we
21 track all the documents, we track all the public
22 comments, and you can find them there. And then you
23 also have the Public Utilities website, which is
24 called eDockets, which also tracks the same thing.
25 I believe our website is more user-friendly to the

1 nonprofessionals. But in this case you're also now
2 going to have a third one because we're working with
3 the feds. And the feds, through Barr Engineering,
4 have a separate website that Julie talked about.

5 So this is -- the comment period will go
6 on, as I said, through August -- I think I said
7 14th, but August 15th. So I'll be collecting your
8 comments. You can send your comments -- and again,
9 this is a little different because I do have Julie
10 here, so you can send your comments to me, you can
11 send your comments to Julie, or you can also go to
12 the website that Julie mentioned and make your
13 comment there. So there are three avenues for you
14 to make comments.

15 We're going to share all the comments
16 among ourselves, so I don't want you to think that
17 your comment is going to get lost. But if you want
18 to send a comment to me on scoping, on an issue that
19 you want to make sure I cover in the environmental
20 impact statement, or you want to come up with an
21 alternative route, please send your comments to me.
22 U.S. mail, e-mail, fax, and also our website has a
23 spot where you can comment. You can also send your
24 comments to Julie and you can also send a comment on
25 the website that the feds are setting up for this

1 process.

2 Wherever you comment -- and you can
3 comment here tonight. Wherever you comment, your
4 comments will become part of the record, public
5 record. We have here tonight, I know everybody
6 touched on it, we have the applicant's consultant,
7 HDR, who have set up the GIS station, so if you want
8 to look at where this route is relative to your
9 property or relative to your interests, I encourage
10 you to go over and talk to these folks, find it on
11 the screen, they can print out a map of it. If you
12 have a comment that you want to tie to that, if you
13 say, you know, I'm concerned about this buttercup or
14 I'm concerned about Pinhook Bog -- I always use
15 Pinhook Bog for some reason -- you can go over to
16 the GIS station, have them find it, print out a copy
17 of it, put your comments on it, and submit your
18 comment either in the box, send them to us at the
19 address that's available, and we'll make sure your
20 comment gets into the record. But remember the
21 comment period closes on the 15th of August.

22 So that's the end of my presentation.
23 What I want to do now is I want to turn it over and
24 I want to get to you people. Since nobody filled
25 out a yellow card, I'm just going to do it by hands.

1 Can you hold on one second?

2 What I'm going to do is I'm going to ask
3 for a show of hands since nobody turned in a card.
4 I'll pick you out, I want you to come, step to the
5 mic, looking at the court reporter I want you to
6 state and spell your name and then either ask your
7 question or make your comment. If you have a
8 question, ask your question, and if I think it's
9 appropriate for DOE or Minnesota Power or Mike to
10 answer because it's in their realm, I'll ask them if
11 they want to answer that.

12 Okay. Show of hands. You in the back,
13 would you please come up to the mic, state and spell
14 your name for the court reporter.

15 MR. DARIN HELLER: Darin Heller -- is
16 this on? Darin Heller, D-A-R-I-N, H-E-L-L-E-R.

17 Okay. My question is, if we have a
18 mile-and-a-quarter swath that they're asking for the
19 permit route to go, and they can put the line
20 anywhere in that mile swath once they get the permit
21 approved, how are we supposed to be able to ask you
22 for a revised route if we don't even know where the
23 actual line is going to go?

24 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. I'll let Jim
25 answer that. As I recall, there's terms that we

1 should -- the route width, the route that they're
2 requesting from the Public Utilities Commission is
3 3,000 feet, right?

4 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Well, it varies, it's
5 anywhere from 1,000 up to about 3,000.

6 MR. BILL STORM: So that's the route. So
7 what a utility does is they come to the Public
8 Utilities Commission for a route. And within that
9 route is where they're going to put their alignment.
10 Their alignment, your right-of-way is 200 feet on
11 this project, right?

12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Right.

13 MR. BILL STORM: So somewhere in that
14 3,000 feet, they want to put their 200-foot
15 right-of-way, okay. In the application they do show
16 their anticipated right-of-way. Okay. This is a
17 3,000-foot-wide route, this is where we anticipate
18 putting the alignment. They want the flexibility of
19 the 3,000 feet so that if they do get the permit and
20 as they hit boots on the ground, somebody may say,
21 well, I'd rather have you go behind my house than in
22 front of my house on the road. So they need a
23 little bit of flexibility for that.

24 There are certain situations where
25 there's an interest or a concern that a landowner

1 has, that the landowner is saying, look, okay, I
2 understand they want 3,000 feet here and I
3 understand they have an anticipated alignment, but I
4 want to make sure that -- I want to narrow that down
5 more for my property because I have a concern. I
6 want to make sure that they are right here through
7 my property.

8 You can request that when we get to the
9 public hearing. We'll be back up here for a public
10 hearing after the draft EIS is done. You can tell
11 the judge, Judge, in your recommendations, I want
12 you to recommend that when they cross the Jones
13 property that the alignment is specified exactly
14 where it's going to be, that they have that
15 flexibility, you want to remove that flexibility.
16 You can do that if you have an issue that warrants
17 removing that flexibility.

18 MR. DARIN HELLER: Second question is,
19 obviously, you know, we're local people and
20 different careers, we're not experts in routing of
21 transmission lines. If we want to propose an
22 alternative route, obviously these landowners that
23 you pointed out probably had some assistance. Where
24 would we go to find the technical expertise to help
25 us propose an alternative route to you as part of

1 this process?

2 MR. BILL STORM: I'll grant you that's a
3 high bar for the public to get over. What the rules
4 say is that if you want to propose a route, you need
5 to bring that alternative forward with your reasons
6 and your supporting information. And I hear often
7 from the public. We try to work with you, if you
8 have a concern and you want help in designing an
9 alternative route segment, we do have the GIS group
10 here tonight where you can walk over and you can
11 show them your concern, and you can have them print
12 out a map for you and they can draw on that map what
13 alternatives you're thinking about.

14 Now, you don't have to know, because
15 we're not asking you to evaluate that alternative.
16 That's up to us to evaluate that alternative. So
17 you don't need to know the scientificness or
18 engineeringness of that alternative. We're just
19 asking you to tell us what you're trying to mitigate
20 and truly mitigate something, not just get it off my
21 property. And then draw a line and -- look at a map
22 and draw a line and see what you think. And if you
23 need help, we can help you refine it a little bit.
24 But that's what the environmental impact statement
25 is all about, is taking your idea and fleshing it

1 out. What are the problems with this alternative
2 Joe is proposing? I mean, Joe might not know it at
3 the time, but he might draw that through a fen, you
4 know, that somebody is really concerned about and
5 that may be a red flag for it. So that's what the
6 EIS is for.

7 The catch-22 that I see the public in is
8 you really -- I understand you don't want to put an
9 alternative on the table that's going to take an
10 environmental scientist ten seconds to say, oh, no,
11 you can't go through that scientific and natural
12 area, that's dead. I understand that's a high bar.
13 We have set up these GIS stations and they do have
14 some of them layers, some of that information they
15 can help you with.

16 But your job -- don't get hung up too
17 much on your job as picking -- evaluating the merits
18 of that alternative. You just have something I want
19 to mitigate, I don't think there's any way to
20 mitigate other than avoidance, and here's my idea
21 for avoidance. We can take it from there. I mean,
22 we may be able to tweak your route a little bit so
23 it makes sense. I mean, you give me a route and you
24 take it through a natural and scientific area and I
25 know it can't, I'm going to look at that and say,

1 well, let's see if we can adjust Joe's route a
2 little bit so it doesn't go through a prohibited
3 area, you know, an area that it can't go through by
4 law.

5 MR. DARIN HELLER: I have one last
6 question. Is there a legal prohibition against --
7 as I'm looking at Google Earth and I'm looking at
8 the route, I'm looking at the actual border between
9 Minnesota, or the United States and Canada. Of an
10 uninhabited wide swath that's already precut, what
11 is prohibiting them from going right down the border
12 and coming down south with the preexisting lines and
13 they already have the presidential permit to cross
14 the border?

15 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. I'm going to have
16 to let MP answer that question. But I can see
17 somebody saying -- and you may want to -- you may
18 want to say, look, Bill, I looked at Google Maps, I
19 see that the border is shaved for security, why
20 don't you just follow down that border. You can
21 submit that as an alternative to me. And there may
22 be an answer that he knows right away because they
23 might have looked at that already and they might
24 have the answer on the top of their head and that
25 might keep it from making it into scope, but that

1 shouldn't keep you from putting it on the table.

2 Jim, do you have anything you want to
3 say?

4 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Well, I guess as far
5 as the following the border, there are some
6 constraints on both sides of the border that we
7 can't go through, which is scientific and natural
8 areas. On the north side there's something of a
9 similar status, not a scientific and natural area.
10 And then just the coming to an agreement on a point
11 where we could actually agree with Manitoba Hydro
12 that it's doable. So that business agreement is a
13 big part of our routing when it comes to the border
14 itself.

15 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: Can I speak to the
16 presidential permit decision?

17 The presidential permit decision wouldn't
18 happen until that border crossing is identified
19 and/or we have studied, if you say there's a swath
20 of the area that potentially there are a couple
21 points of access that the business agreement could
22 tolerate, we would make sure the environmental
23 analysis covers the impacts so that it's clear to
24 you as well as clear to the decision-makers at DOE
25 for the presidential permit decision that that is an

1 acceptable border crossing.

2 I also do want to mention that in a
3 presidential permit decision we also have to gain
4 concurrence by the Department of State as well as
5 the Department of Defense. So while this is a DOE
6 decision, we do also have to work within our federal
7 family for issues related to national security,
8 public interest, and other pieces of information
9 that heed that decision. But we would not issue the
10 permit and then that border crossing could change
11 willy-nilly.

12 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. I do want to
13 address your comment a little bit more.

14 I realize the bar is high. If you --
15 there are two steps to evaluate. If you submit to
16 me during the comment period, Bill, I want you to
17 look at that, just what you said, I take those
18 comments and I'll seek information from the utility
19 on it. And I'll look at what their argument is
20 against it as I present to my commissioner what
21 should be in the scope. And if what I get back from
22 them doesn't quite convince me that, yeah, there's a
23 red flag here, this is not possible, then I push it
24 to scope, you know, and then it gets fleshed out
25 even deeper. So if you do bring that to the table

1 during this comment period, at the end of the
2 comment period, as I said, I'll bundle the comments,
3 and I'll ask MP, I want your opinion on all of this,
4 give it to me. And if their opinion is not
5 documented and fleshed out enough it may make it to
6 scope.

7 Any show of hands? Oh, come on.

8 Okay. As I said, I really appreciate you
9 guys coming out, this process is all about getting
10 input from you to help me make a better document.
11 There are poster boards here that show some stuff,
12 there are copies of the application, and we do have
13 two GIS stations up here, I encourage you to go look
14 at it, get your printouts, get your comments made,
15 drop your comments in the comment box or send them
16 to me or to Jules, and we'll make sure your comment
17 gets on the record. But I do appreciate you coming.

18 I'll give you one last chance. Anybody
19 want to speak?

20 Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. JIM ATKINSON: And we do have a full
22 complement of data layers.

23 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. There is a full
24 complement of data layers on the GIS so you'll be
25 able to see the conflicting information if you do

1 come up with an alternative route.

2 Thank you, everybody. Really.

3 (Meeting concluded at 12:14 p.m.)

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25